

Release of Pakistani fishermen

4456. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has, recently, released 160 Pakistani fishermen;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan has also announced similar gesture on reciprocity basis, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to take up the release of Indians presently languishing in Pakistani jails?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) On February 9, 2001, Government unilaterally decided to release 160 Pakistani fishermen detained in India. These fishermen are expected to be repatriated shortly.

(b) Subsequently, Pakistan announced the release of 84 Indian fishermen in its custody. It later permitted consular access to another 76 fishermen detained in Pakistan. It is expected that these 160 Indian fishermen would shortly return to India.

(c) Our efforts at securing the early release of the remaining 142 Indian fishermen in Pakistani custody continue.

Resumption of Talks on Kashmir

4457. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons killed by militants in Jammu and Kashmir since the declaration of cease-fire by Government;

(b) whether Government have taken any fresh initiative with the Government of Pakistan to resume talks for the solution of Kashmir problem; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what is the response of that Government in regard thereto?